Purchases of coking coal by the Steel Authority of India

362. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Steel Authority of India (SAIL) makes spot purchases of coking coal in overseas market and has not entered into any long term contracts for imports of coking coal;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the international coal prices have risen, particularly after 1985;

(c) what are the purchase prices and the quantity of coking coal imported by the SAIL for the past three spot purchase deals; and

(d) whether government have taken any decision to import coking coal for steel industry on long term contract basis rather than making spot purchases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir, the prices of coking coal in the international market exhibited a declining trend between 1985 to 1987. However, in the current year, the itnernational coal prices have gone up as compared to 1987-88 prices.

(c) SAIL has, under the last three purchases, concluded contracts with overseas suppliers for import of 2.64 million tonnes of coking coal at an FOB value of about Rs. 163 crores.

(d) SAIL's proposal to explore the possibilities of entering into long term contracts with suppliers for meeting a part of its requirements of imported coking coal is currently under examination of the Government.

Television centre at Visakhapatnam

363. SHRI YALLASESI [illegible] SHANA RAO: Will the Minister INFORMATION AND BRADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Television viewers in certain areas of Visakhapatnam city are unable to watch the Television programmes since areas in which they reside fall in shadow regions;

(b) if so, whether the wrong selection of site for the erection of low power Simhachalam transmitter commissioned in 1986 is responsible the shadow regions; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to rectify the defect

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. BHAGAT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The site at Simhachalam hill was selected keeping in view the optimum coverage and other technical factors.

(c) It has been decided to instal transposer to provide TV service the shadow area.

Comparative analysis of working of F.C.I.

364. SHRI SHARAD YADAV
SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA
SHRI KAPIL VERMA
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any comparative analysis of the working of the Fertiliser Corporation of India has been made recently by Government;

(b) if so, when and the authority who has made such an analysis and what is the outcome thereof she

the comparative loss suffered by FCI during the years 1985, 1986 and 1987;

(c) what are the main reasons identified by Government for the continuous losses incurred by FCI; and

(d) what remedial measures are being contemplated by Government to improve its working?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FERTILIZERS IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. PRABHU): (a) to (d) Although no comparative analysis of the working of the Fertilizer Corporation of India (FCI) has been made, Government had set up a Task Force on 27.6.1986 under the Chairmanship of Shri Paul Pothen to go into the working of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation and FCI. The main reasons for the losses incurred by FCI are low capacity utilisation due to frequent equipment breakdown, power problems, design deficiency etc. The remedial measures include closure of Sindri Rationalisation plant and writing of its losses, revamp and rehabilitation of Ramagundam and Talcher plants in the light of Krupp Kopper's report, revamping and technology upgradation of the Urea plant at Gorakhpur, etc.

Capacity increase in Tata Iron and Steel Company

365. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for approval of capacity increase in Tata Iron and Steel Company; and

(b) whether any change in technology is also involved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) and (b) TISCO have submitted a proposal to Government for an 'in principle' approval to further modernise their steel plant at Jamshedpur. The proposed modernisation is expected to result in expansion of present capacity of 2.1 Million Tonne to a capacity of 2.7 Million Tonne of saleable steel. The proposal also envisages some technological improvements.

Amendment of the Factories Act

366. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any suggestion for amendment of the Factories Act; and

(b) if so, what are the major amendments suggested and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): (a) and (b) The Factories Act, 1948 was amended during the Budget Session 1987. After the amendments had been made, representations, were received from certain organisations of employers seeking further amendments to the Act. The suggestions mainly related to amendment to the definition of 'Occupier'. Grant of exemption to small scale industries from the provisions of the Act, reduction in penal provisions, safeguards against misuse of powers by Inspectors, etc.

The Act has been amended to provide for safer and better working conditions and environment in the factories. The Government are not in favour of amending the provisions of the Act.

Subsidies for rice and wheat

367. SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) what is the rate of subsidy per quintal granted for rice and wheat